



**NORTH DAKOTA**  
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:  
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**Clinic Provides Dental Sealants to Children**  
*North Dakota Department of Health and Bridging the Dental Gap*  
*Sponsor Seal! North Dakota*

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health and Bridging the Dental Gap, a safety-net dental clinic in Bismarck, today held a Seal! North Dakota dental sealant clinic. About 21 second- and sixth-grade students from Riverside Elementary School received dental sealants at the event.

Seal! North Dakota is a program designed to provide dental sealants to school-age children, especially those who don't have access to regular preventive dental care. Dental sealants are a thin plastic coating placed on the pits and fissures of the chewing surfaces of molars (back teeth). Sealants prevent tooth decay by sealing out food and decay-causing germs. They can prevent cavities and the need for expensive fillings. Sealants can last up to 10 years and have been shown to reduce tooth decay by more than 70 percent.

At today's Seal! North Dakota event, First Lady Mikey Hoeven, Healthy North Dakota spokesperson, discussed the relationship between oral health and overall health.

"Tooth decay is a preventable chronic disease that affects children's ability to concentrate and learn, as well as their speech, eating habits, activity levels, self-esteem and physical health," Mrs. Hoeven said. "By ensuring children receive oral health preventive care, we are helping to build a healthy North Dakota."

Today's Seal! North Dakota clinic was made possible through the volunteer efforts of Bridging the Dental Gap executive director Marcia Olson and clinic staff and through the cooperation of Jason Hornbacher, principal, and Lisa Kadlec, family care coordinator, of Riverside Elementary

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School in Bismarck. Dr. Joanne Luger, Dr. Kristin Schoch, Dr. Leslie Hollevoet and staff at Bridging the Dental Gap screened the students and applied dental sealants at today's event.

Bridging the Dental Gap serves children and adults within a 50-mile radius of Bismarck who cannot afford or do not have access to regular dental care.

"We are here to assist children and adults in the area who are in need and do not have access to preventative dental care," Olson said. "We are seeing an increase in emergency cases and people who are experiencing severe health problems related to poor oral health.

"Bridging the Dental Gap does not receive any outside funding and is limited to the assistance that can be provided," Olson said. "Our goal is to improve oral health through access to care and to provide a dental home for individuals who do not currently have one."

For more information about Seal! North Dakota or dental sealants, contact Robyn Stearns, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.400.8486.

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